

October 30, 2023

The Honorable Governor Jay Inslee
Office of the Governor
Post Office Box 40002
Olympia, Washington 98504-0002

Dear Governor Inslee,

Hunger in Washington state is a problem that has not subsided. In fact, hunger relief agencies today are seeing demand at levels that exceed, in many cases, food insecurity during the peak of the pandemic.

Hunger relief food bank distribution centers are purchasing more food than ever before - at higher costs, moving it faster, and maintaining their lowest levels of inventory. It has become the new normal.

Washington landfills are overburdened with wasted food that contributes to methane emissions, the most dangerous form of greenhouse gas. It is why the state established goals for Washington to reduce the annual generation of food waste by 50 percent by 2030.

Washington growers and producers produce food in abundance and have incredible amounts that end up unsold. These foods are often, but not maximally, donated at nominal "pick and pack out" costs to hunger relief efforts. For example, Feeding Washington, the nonprofit produce cooperative of the state's two Feeding America partners, sourced more than 53 million pounds of donated Washington produce last year – only scratching the surface regarding what is available.

For these reasons, **we, the undersigned organizations, are requesting that you include \$25 million in your 2024 State Operating Budget proposal for harvesting and transportation costs associated with donated agricultural commodities.** These are monies paid to Washington growers and producers for processing and packaging donated agricultural products in an acceptable size for food banks.

This investment would nearly double the food available for hunger relief efforts statewide – food that may otherwise be lost – at a time when it is needed most. It is estimated that an additional 52.5 million pounds of produce and up to 10 million pounds of highly desired items like meat, seafood, eggs, and dairy products are available to be distributed throughout the state's existing food banking networks.

To be sure, this potential to divert more than 60 million pounds of Washington agricultural commodities is a win for Washington families, a win for Washington farmers and food producers, and a win for the climate.

Thank you for your consideration,

State Representative Beth Doglio
22nd Legislative District

Aaron Czyzewski
Director of Advocacy & Public Policy
Food Lifeline

Alimentando al Pueblo
Faithhouse
New Beginnings Christian Fellowship
Hoquiam Food and Clothing Bank
North West Life Center
Communities in Schools of Greater King County
Renton Technical College
Second Harvest
The Giving Room food bank
Colville Tribes Food Distribution
The Salvation Army Spokane Corps
Spokane Valley Partners
Thurston County Food Bank
The Greenhouse Food Bank
Food Lifeline
Chelan Douglas Community Action Council
South Park Senior Citizens
Vashon Maury Community Food Bank
Prison Scholar Fund
Pike Market Senior Center and Food Bank
Lopez Island Family Resource Center (Lopez Food Share)
Salt of the Earth Food Blessing
Emmanuel Food Pantry
ACT - A Common Thread
Good Neighbor Senior Center Association of Ocean Shores / DBA North Beach Senior Center
Iena relief
Issaquah Food & Clothing Bank
First Tongan Senior Association/Sound Generations
Feeding Washington
Kalama Helping Hand

Restore and Repair Missionary Outreach
Eloise's Cooking Pot Food Bank
Sumner Community Food Bank
Northwest Tribal Emergency Management Council
The Silent Task Force
American Polynesian Organization
Faith Center Food Bank-The Refuge
Greater Chehalis Food Bank
Gifts from the Heart Food Bank, Coupeville
St. Dunstan's Episcopal Church
Monday Night Supper
Friday Harbor Food Bank
Maltby Food Bank
Sierra Crook
Port Townsend Food Bank
Hood Canal Food Bank
AT The Core
Lake Chelan Food Bank
North shore bible church
FPI Management
Ione House of Hope
The Food Bank @ St. Mary's
Maple Valley Food Bank & Emergency Services
St Leo's Food Connection
Plant Based Food Share
Catholic Charities of Eastern Washington
Yelm Prairie Christian Center
Manzanita House
The Storehouse, Covington's Food Bank
Jewish Family Service Seattle

Spokane Housing Authority
PRkway Community Services
Olympic Community Action Programs
Opportunity Council
South King County Food Coalition
Grace Court Senior Living
Westgate Chapel Food Bank
North Whidbey Help Inc.
Project Hope / Lynden Food Bank
Lutheran Community Services NW
Mercy Housing
Nooksack Valley Food Bank
West Central Community Center
White Center Food Bank
Anichigu Luma Amenigini Garifuna WomenSoutheast Washington Alliance for Health
Des Moines Area Food Bank
CHAS Health
Community Food Bank of Dayton

Cc: Ruth Musgrave, Senior Policy Advisor for Natural Resources
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